



**NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office
of Innovation & Performance Analysis**

Lee Harris, Mayor

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building
11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jennifer L. Sharp
Strategic Communications Specialist
Office: 901.222.2011
Mobile: 901.661.1522

**SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT HOSTS PORTRAIT UNVEILING CEREMONY
FOR LONGTIME SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER AND CIVIL RIGHTS ICON
WALTER L. BAILEY, JR.**

*Mayor Lee Harris and Commission Chairman Mickell M. Lowery will host the event today,
December 13, 2022 at the National Civil Rights Museum.*



(Longtime Shelby County Commissioner Walter L. Bailey, Jr.)

Shelby County, TN – Today, December 13, 2022, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris and Shelby County Board of Commissioners Chairman Mickell M. Lowery will host a portrait unveiling ceremony for longtime Shelby County Commissioner Walter L. Bailey, Jr. The ceremony will take place at 1:30 p.m. at the National Civil Rights Museum, located at 450 Mulberry Street, Memphis TN 38103.

The portrait rises five feet and was painted by Memphis native, Carl Hess, a nationally-acclaimed artist whose subjects include President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Bishop T.D. Jakes, and a 14-portrait series for Tyler Perry’s sound stages in Atlanta, Georgia.



(Nationally-acclaimed artist Carl Hess)

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: “Icon, innovator, and trailblazer are some of the words that describe Walter L. Bailey, Jr. Commissioner Bailey is the epitome of excellence and has set a path for how leaders in this county should fight for justice and equality for all. I am thrilled to honor someone who I consider to be a mentor, political leader, and, more importantly, a social justice pioneer of our time.”

Chairman Mickell M. Lowery, Shelby County Board of Commissioners: “I am appreciative of the opportunity to honor a legend and advocate for social justice. Walter L. Bailey, Jr.’s work in Shelby County is paramount and is something that should be recognized. Mr. Bailey has set a foundation for many Shelby County Commissioners, such as myself, and I look forward to honoring him and his legacy.”

About Walter L. Bailey, Jr:

Walter L. Bailey, Jr. was born on August 21, 1940. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School, Walter Bailey attended Southern University where he participated in a variety of civil rights activities organized by his brother, the late Judge D'Army Bailey. Always striving for excellence, he received his Juris Doctor from Southern University Law Center before starting the Walter Bailey Law Firm.

In the courtroom, Walter Bailey earned national recognition after taking on several high-profile legal battles including efforts to desegregate Memphis schools. He also represented Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the sanitation workers' strike of 1968. Walter Bailey's most famous legal success, a case which reached the Supreme Court, established that law enforcement could not use deadly force when a suspect is fleeing unless his or her life is threatened. This landmark decision remains a standard for law enforcement officers today.

Walter Bailey's decades of elected public service began in 1971 when he joined the Shelby County Board of Commissioners. His service spanned four decades and eleven terms until his retirement in 2018, making him the longest-serving member of the Board of Commissioners.

In 2008, he received the Pillars of Excellence award from the University of Memphis Law School Alumni Chapter. In 2018, the Shelby County Criminal Justice Center, known as "201 Poplar," was renamed the "Walter L. Bailey, Jr. Criminal Justice Center." The portrait will be featured publicly at this location.